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STATE FOR EUR/WE, IO AND PM
UNVIE VIENNA FOR IAEA MISSION:DPAPPAS

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TAGS: [MNUC](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIAN CANDIDATE FOR IAEA DIRECTOR GENERAL
REMAINS QUIETLY AVAILABLE

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Richard Eason, reason 1.4(b)
) and (d).

11. (C) Poloff spoke on June 11 with Werner Bauwens, Belgian Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, about the candidacy of Jean-Pol Poncelet for Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Bauwens was in Budapest. He said that he was disappointed that Poncelet had not received any votes at all from the IAEA governing board's recent straw poll, but that the failure was "not traumatic." Bauwens said he was particularly disappointed that Germany voted for the Spanish candidate, Echevarria, and believes the vote was primarily political, in that both Germany and Spain have Socialist governments. Echevarria's other votes came from Latin American countries, he thinks. He said that the deadlock over the Japanese and South African candidates was easily foreseeable, and that was one important reason the Belgians put forward a candidate in the person of Poncelet. Bauwens has been trying to get meetings for Poncelet in Washington without success and would like to arrange them if possible. He hopes the selection process can move quickly in order that the IAEA not remain leaderless at a critical time, when events are moving quickly in North Korea and Iran. He clearly feels that a turn to Poncelet could avoid a drawn-out battle between the Japanese and South African candidates, Amano and Minty.

12. (C) Bauwens said that Poncelet "remains at the disposal of the IAEA board", but that he and the GOB do not want to complicate things for the IAEA. The Belgians are only offering an option, he said, and if the board shows interest in Poncelet, the Belgians will gladly re-energize his candidacy.

13. (C) Poloff met Poncelet at a luncheon for Brussels diplomats hosted in his honor by the Belgian Government on June 5. Poncelet pointed to his mixed background both as a government official (former Minister of Defense of Belgium) and as a civilian with nuclear-related experience, having been trained in nuclear engineering and working for AREVA in France. He says he wants to open a non-confrontational path for IAEA, drawing on his experience with the kind of compromise that is essential to success in Belgian politics. He would like to see a renaissance in nuclear power generation, with appropriate emphasis on safety. The IAEA should set worldwide standards, he said. It should support the development of nuclear power generation in developing countries. Such countries have a long way to go in developing expertise in managing nuclear plants, he admitted, and the IAEA should facilitate training and increase safeguards. Doing so will require increased activity with limited means, and Poncelet believes he has the management skills to accomplish that. He wants the IAEA to have independent access to inspection technologies and legal authority to undertake such actions. Poncelet also wants to

promote and support development of non-energy uses of nuclear technology, such as medical isotopes (which are produced in Belgium, by the way). He looks forward to undertaking the new tasks that will come to IAEA if there is a new or enhanced agreement on disarmament in the future. He pledges to "stay independent" -- even from the influences of Belgian politics, where there will soon be an intense debate over delaying or rescinding a mandated phase-out of nuclear power generation by 2015. Poncelet did not make any significant statements on control of nuclear proliferation or Iran, apparently trying to steer clear of such controversies. We believe he would be willing to speak privately to U.S. officials about such topics.

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